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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF
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Agenda item 7

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

Corrigendum

Replace paragraphs 10 and 11 with the following text.

10. At the 199th meeting, on 27 January 1992, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna addressed the Committee.

11. She said that cataclysmic changes had occurred in the world since CEDAW last met. While global conflicts had receded, other internecine conflicts had emerged. She noted that while hopes had been raised by the prospects of a new ordering of international relations, not all new developments were favourable to women. Respect for human rights, including those of women, and the application of international norms were the only way to protect people in periods of conflict and fundamental change. It was one way to ensure that women would be full participants in the processes of reform and renewal and not their victims. She observed a change in the global human rights debate which was moving away from a concern for their de jure existence alone. Today's key concern was focusing on their de facto implementation. She pointed out that the Committee had always recognized that trend. That new understanding of the meaning of human rights brought them closer to what could be termed social policy. Social policy was about steps that could be taken to achieve social well-being. It was mostly expressed in terms of public policies that converted norms into law and set up programmes to regulate the enjoyment of rights.

12. She then pointed to a profound misconception, namely, the tendency to think that human rights were gender neutral. They should be gender neutral, but in practice they were not, she said. That underlying assumption of gender neutrality still persisted, for example in the preparations for the World Conference on Human Rights. She stressed the need to reaffirm that human rights without women's rights could not exist, and that the Committee could continue to contribute so that there was full understanding of that link. The Committee could examine the gaps between de jure and de facto rights, it could provide a gender analysis of social and economic realities and it could point to the failures of society, such as in the case of violence against women.

13. She concluded by underlining the signal importance of CEDAW's contribution to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women. The Committee, as a treaty body, was in the unique position of establishing and maintaining a continuous dialogue with States parties. Through its recommendations, it could improve national reporting, it could enrich and strengthen the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, and it could influence the work of other human rights treaty bodies. CEDAW's contribution to the World Conference on Human Rights would strengthen the link between human rights and women's rights and the achievement of full equality for women.

14. Members of the Committee expressed appreciation for the increased support provided by the Secretariat for the Committee's work, but also pointed out that resources were still limited. The Committee faced an increasing backlog of reports, and had to prepare its contributions to the World Conference on Human Rights, the World Conference on Women and the International Year of the Family. Members expressed their hope for adequate support in those endeavours. In response, the Director-General noted the constraints under which the Secretariat had to operate and expressed the hope that the matter could be drawn to the attention of the appropriate intergovernmental bodies.